DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 099 828 CS 001 550

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TITLE ["Greensboro Record" (North Carolina) Series Describing One School System's Attempts to Prevent Reading Failure.]
PUB DATE 73
NOTE 11p.; 1974 International Reading Association Media Award Winner for Best Series in Newspaper with Circulation under 100,000

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Reading; Reading Diagnosis; *Reading Improvement; *Reading Instruction; *Reading Programs
IDENTIFIERS Greensboro; North Carolina; *Right to Read

ABSTRACT

These stories formed a series in the Greensboro, North Carolina, "News-Record" describing a school system's attempts to prevent reading failure. The themes of the articles include the following: the implementation of the Right to Read program in an elementary school; a diagnostic reading center which is an alternative, a supplement, and a prod for a cooperative effort to help children read; the five steps through which students progress in the Right to Read diagnostic-prescriptive approach to learning how to read; and the International Reading Association's local and international efforts to improve reading abilities of students. (WR)

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["Greensboro Record" (North Carolina) Series Descri
One School System's Attempts to Prevent Reading Fa

Barbara Ross

JAN 1 8 1973

Reading Classes Appeal To Kids

BY BARBARA ROSS
Record Staff Writer

Alderman School's adaptation of the Right to Read program isn't just an attempt to turn non-reading youngsters into readers.

"We are working with all the students," project leaders assure, explaining there also is a challenge "to make a good reader a better reader."

In the program's first year, Alderman Principal Hazel Perritt and Project Director Tom Slatton have witnessed cases of student "metamorphosis."

There are six-year-olds who have developed a rapport with adults. The evidence is unmistakable in youngsters' eagerness to wish Miss Perritt or Slatton "good morning" or to put colorful papers before appreciative eyes for approval.

Slatton attributes student metamorphosis to the school's openness and freedom from pressure to produce somebody's definition of desired results in a definite time period.

"I think we've proved a lot of points," the director said.

Point one is: "teaming is a better approach to identifying student needs and opening up teachers." The consequence, Slatton explained, is that a student has a better chance of working with an adult to whom he relates.

Slatton's second point is what he describes as the "psychology of the present approach," emphasizing openness and sincerity with students. "You can't buy their love," he explained. "You've got to deserve it."

"The teacher's chore is to expose knowledge to the child at

(Continued On Page B-2, Col. 2)

Words, Words, Words

Alderman Teacher, Mrs. Carole Hester, Prompts Students In Developin

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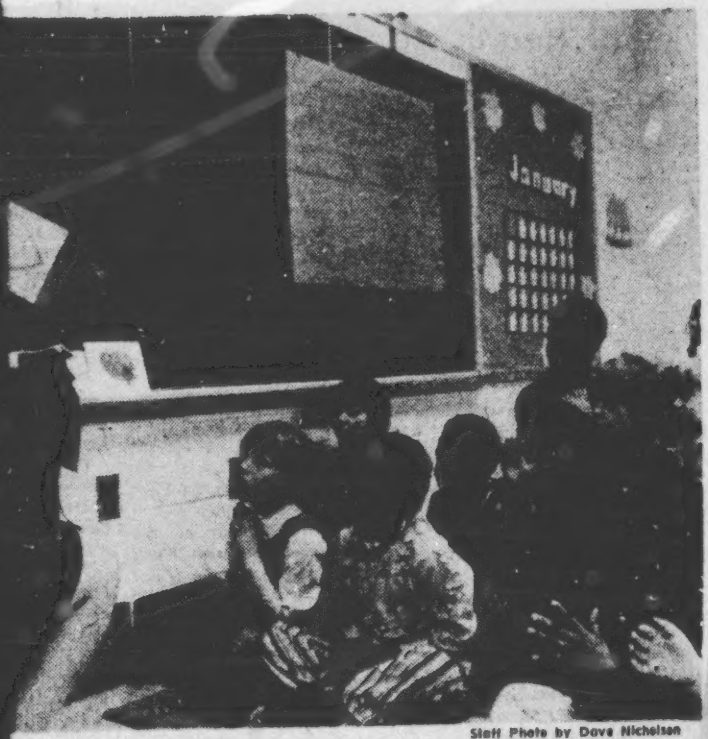

Staff Photo by Dave Nicholson

Words, Words, Words

rs. Carole Hester, Prompts Students In Developing Reading Skills

Plan Well Received

(Continued From Page B1)

his level. The child teaches himself."

Alderman was the one school in Greensboro's public school system selected to implement the Right to Read Program to expand what were recognized as "promising reading practices."

The program stresses diagnosis of a child' stability, staff involvement, and a diversity of activities to allow each child to develop positive attitudes as well as a feeling of success.

Even in the readiness stage, explained Miss Perritt, a child has to experience success.

Alderman's students are encouraged to read, but it isn't all presented in book form. There are plays, experiences in story-telling, puppet shows and a de-emphasis of "drills" in favor of a more relaxed atmosphere.

Slatton suggested there is a significant contribution the teacher can make in developing an appreciation for reading. That's "by the teacher being in love with books herself."

The program encourages parents' participation in the media center and other areas inside the school, but also in field trips and outside activities. There is room, Slatton said, for "the giant show and tell."

Recognizing the school pairing relationship, Alderman's program leaders are working with Jonesboro officials to provide a smooth transition as students advance.

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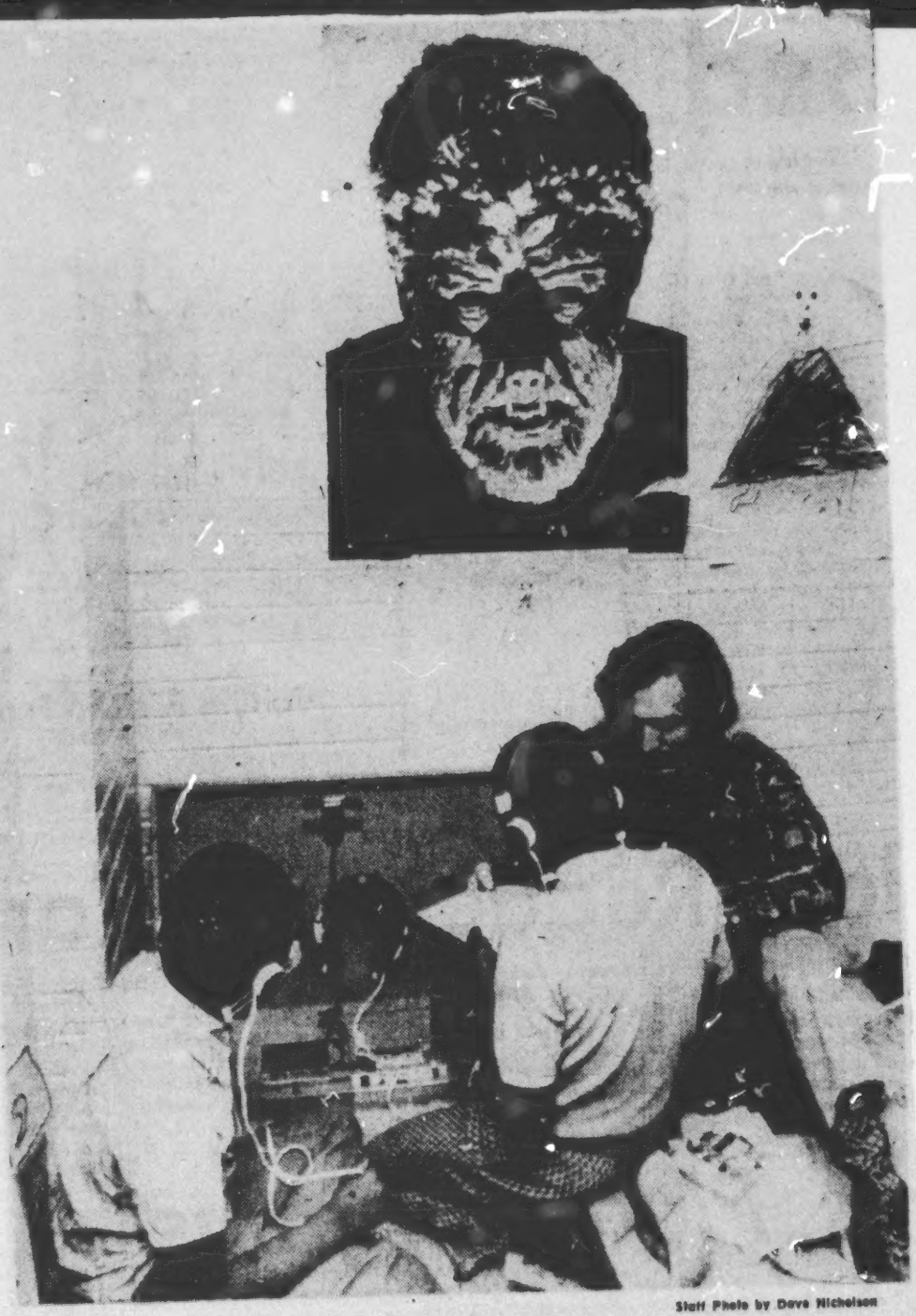

Staff Photo by Dave Nicholson

Does Wolfman Read?

Russell Hailey, Right, A Teacher Aide, tries Several Approaches In Reading Development

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JAN 15 1973

Reading Center Hits Old Pro

BY BARBARA ROSS
Record Staff Writer

It's pretty simple to relegate to the schools a long list of responsibilities including "teaching Johnny to read."

But does he read? Does he have the ability and the interest?

When Johnny entered school to join the pursuit for experience and knowledge, did he "take off" with the others? What happens if he's left behind?

"We're finding out the schools are not teaching all children to read," explained Dr. Alvin Granowsky, director of an innovative reading diagnostic center for Greensboro Public Schools.

"This is not just Greensboro's problem," he assured. "It is a national problem. Greensboro is no better and no worse."

Are there actually more children with reading problems today?

Dr. Granowsky says no. In the old days, he noted, people who couldn't read or succeed dropped out of school. As a result, "The United States is loaded with illiterate adults. Probably 30 per cent or less had high school diplomas in the old days.

"Now we're trying to keep them in school," he said, and that requires both a recognition of the problems and new attempts at solutions.

What about Johnny and his school chums?

Any child, Dr. Granowsky explained, "is going to look for something that meets his ego needs and has status in his mind." If he can't succeed academically, where are the acceptable alternatives?

The reading diagnostic center, housed in Jones School, is an alternative, a supplement and a prod for a cooperative effort to help children to read.

The center is designed for third and fourth graders in seven Title I schools, enabling it to receive federal funding. These are: Hunter, Jonesboro, Vandalia, Murphy, Caldwell, Lindley and Erwin.

Still in its beginning stages, it is assisting 25 students on the basis of referral by school officials. "We think we could handle about 160 in an intensive kind of program," Dr. Granowsky said.

But there is still one nagging element. According to the director, there is no firm figure for the number of students absolutely unable to read their school materials.

There are definded procedures for a student's referral and the initial screening before he is accepted into the reading center's program.

"We've asked for the schools' problems," Dr. Granowsky said. If a child can't read "what does he do to save himself? What about this ego thing?

"I can't imagine what is worse for a kid (and parent) than to be deemed stupid and face this every day."

A defense is the defiant "I don't care." Some students refuse to read. Some become distracting influences in their class setting when actually, the director explained, "what they're really asking for is help. I'm not blaming the teacher. She can't cope."

A diagnosis of the student's learning problems presents judgments beyond the surface dislike or inability to read.

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They might and do point out basic feelings of insecurity, perhaps as a result of a broken home or early trauma; feelings of inadequancy and unworthiness because of constant failure; visual perception difficulties; distractability (the child is fidgety, hyperactive, insecure).

How does the center react?

"We've got to make them feel secure, loved," Dr. Granowsky said. "They're here to learn reading and we barrage them

(Continued On Page B2, Col. 4)

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Slow Readers Are Target

(Continued From Page B1)

with love and affection."

A primary task is to improve the child's self-concept.

"To learn anything new, there has to be a certain amount of trial and error and frustration," Dr. Granowsky said. "If a child can't accept failure, avoidance techniques come in."

The center's staff develops a precription for each child. A piano with Jackson Five music, stories dictated by the child or a Wolfman image are some of the approaches used to trigger the child's interest.

The staff includes a diagnostician who is a remedial reading specialist, Mrs. Eliza Bingham; two instructional supervisors who are experienced teachers (Mrs. Edna Fisher, a Price School teacher for more than 20 years, and a new staff addition, Mark Fisher); five instructional aides; a typist and driver.

Part of the prescriptive approach is to devlop school and family support to provide the types of reading experiences and encouragement recommended for the child.

Copies of the child's prescription go to his school and his home. There is a type of contract that spells out the center's objectives, the teacher's commitment and, depending upon the home, the participation of a parent or family member to

But the center isn't asking the parent or family member to become, in effect, an after-school-hours teacher.

In most cases, the objective is to develop a positive attitude toward reading that will continue beyond the child's hours in the reading center.

Dr. Granowsky is grateful for support from the pupil personnel services branch of the schools system, including guidance, psychological, health and social services aspects.

If a child doesn't read or want to read, where are the barriers? Without detection and removal, the alternative, according to Dr. Granowsky, may be "freezing him out of the educational process.

"If you block a child out of a legitimate avenue for success, what alternative is there?" he asked.

APR 2 1973

Learning To Read

BY BARBARA ROSS
Record Staff Writer

"R 2 R" is the shorthand form for an intensive experience involving faculty, students and parents of Alderman School.

The symbols represent Right to Read.

Tom Slatton, project director, admits there is a good deal of mystery in the minds of many about what actually has been going on in Alderman this year.

The keys are five steps in a "diagnostic-prescriptive approach" to learning.

The process begins in Slatton's office at the school, where each child is tested individually to determine his level of ability. The measure is a reading criterion test.

After the child's needs are determined, he is put in a word attack skill group in which different techniques — such as games, books and other materials — will be used.

In stage three, the child is part of a reading comprehension group which uses the textbook method in small groups. Each child is given the opportunity to work with several adults.

The child then has advanced to using "self-corrective materials" for independent work. He can select what he needs and wants since this stage of development is "open."

At the end of the scale, the child is able to use the media center to advantage, selecting books for himself.

The desired end product of this process is a child who is capable of and interested in reading. To help accomplish the objective, Slatton explained, "we plan many, many hours for the child to read books he has selected."

Right to Read is aimed toward "making the child independent

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Developing Reading Skills And Interest Of

Belle Carter Illustrates How Students Progress Through The Right To Read Program. The Sequence, Left To Right, Is Testing For Rea
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To Read Involves Five Steps

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Right to Read is aimed toward "making the child independent and self-directed in the task of reading," he added.

Most of the children in Alderman should be through the five stages of program development by the end of the third level, according to Slatton.

He pointed out that some children will need only two levels and some might require five, estimating that about eight per cent probably will need more readiness work and more one-to-one work with a teacher.

The tradition from which Alderman has departed is the "you're a first grader, you'll read as a first grader" approach.

"Now we have gotten sophisticated enough that we can recognize the needs of a child, not his grade level," Slatton explained. Inquiring parents are told, on the basis of a record-keeping system, what their child can or cannot do.

Overall in the program, Slatton said, there is concern for

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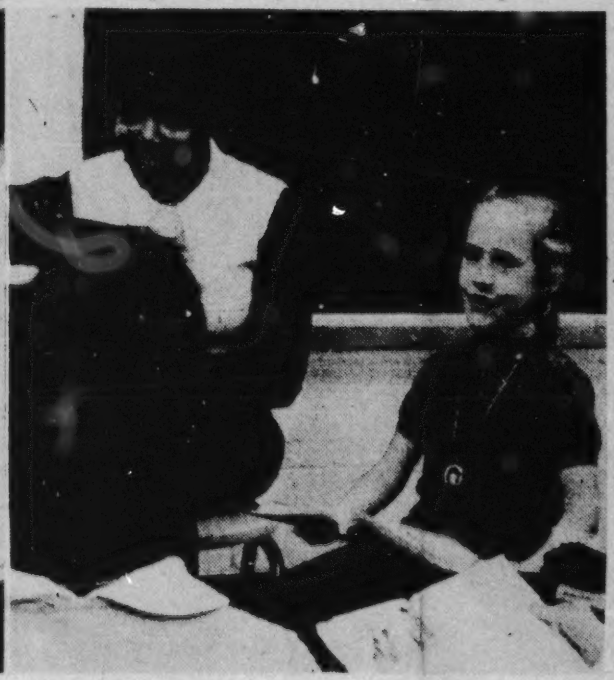

Staff Photos by Jimmie Jeffries

g Skills And Interest Of Alderman Students

equence, Left To Right, Is Testing For Reading Level Mrs. Linda Scoggins; Skill Groups, Aided By Margaret Watts, A Teacher; Reading acher; And Finally Selection Of Reading Materials With Sharon Harzman, Media Specialist

5 Steps In Reading Process

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(Continued From Page B1)

successful experiences for the child in a "happy, relaxed, open" school atmosphere.

"If we put a child in a group, class, book or situation in which he can't feel successful, we have harmed the child," Slatton declared. "We have a non-failure policy here."

In its first year the program is achieving success, he affirmed, in terms of "significant growth in almost all our children." The program is concentrated as much toward the high achiever as it is the low achiever, according to the project director.

Parents do question Right to Read.

To the question "Is my child as far along as in a traditional program?" Slatton assures the parent his child is further along. When parents ask how they can help their child at home, the Alderman staff can make suggestions.

Parents who wonder what happens when their child goes to Jonesboro School (which is paired with Alderman) are told that Jonesboro staff members will be involved in training during August to prepare for receiving Alderman students.

Alderman's approach to Right to Read, which is a nationally-funded effort aimed at the problem of illiteracy, is the school's distinct program, Incorporating the Wisconsin Design for Reading Skill Development.

Slatton explaineed that the program is planned so that once federal funds are no longer avaiilable, the program can survive on the basis of staff development and experience acquired.

"It's been a very tough year, very intensive," he said. "It takes hours of hard work beyond the call of duty."

What are the results?

"This is the type of thing that creates a happy atmosphere," he said. If we don't have a happy, relaxed, open atmosphere in a school, we don't have much of anything."

Staff Photo by Jimmie Jeffries

One-To-One Work

Margaret Watts, Alderman Teacher, And Belle Carter Show The Role Individualized Teaching Plays In Right To Read

Local Councils Vital

AUG 11 1973

IRA Stresses Reading Imp

BY BARBARA ROSS
Record Staff Writer

If you were to pick up a French or German newspaper, how much would you learn from the expense and experience?

If you get no further than identifying certain faces in the news, you begin to understand restrictions of the non-reading or poorly reading population in your own country.

Overcoming the inability to read is part of the objective of the International Reading Association through its local councils.

But it's also concerned about the positive aspect of not just acquiring the necessary skills, but actually reading.

"I don't know what you do if you don't read," pondered Kay Hays, field consultant for the IRA (not to be confused with Irish Republican Army).

Based in Newark, Del., she was in Greensboro yesterday and today to co-conduct an area conference for 10 councils in the North Carolina Council of the IRA.

The conference yesterday afternoon and this morning in the Golden Eagle Motor Inn was a training workshop to help councils improve their own efforts.

But Conference Chairman Clara Scarborough, who is sec
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Chairman Clara Scarborough, who is secretary of the host group Greater Greensboro Council, welcomes Miss Hays' visit as an opportunity to develop stronger ties with the IRA.

As part of IRA efforts, Miss Hays noted, "we help teachers to become better reading teachers."

She credits state councils of the organization with helping to upgrade requisites for teacher preparation to include more courses in reading.

"Teaching children to like to read" is part of the task at hand. But the organization also is interested in helping teachers and parents know

(Continued On Page B4, Col. 6)

Miss Hays

Group Stresses Reading

(Continued From B1)

how to select good materials.

Just the definition of reading has been broadened considerably, Miss Hays reminded. It's certainly gotten away from the idea of sitting down as a class to read basal readers."

Increasing teacher competence for reading instruction is considered by the IRA as a type of preventive medicine to overcome the need for remediation to focus on reading needs.

In actual practice, according to Mrs. Scarborough, there is a trend away from the concept of reading on a certain grade level to recognize a child's individual reading skills or needs.

Miss Hays contends that "what the teacher does is even more important than the materials are."

If a child is a reluctant reader, she suggested, the teacher may encourage him to read, talk about or write about his particular interest. Maybe it is bugs.

A parent, she added, may influence his child to read in several ways including reading to the child, letting the youngster see him reading, taking the kids on an excursion and either discussing or compiling a booklet about the experience, encouraging the child to talk or taking time to answer those persistent questions.

"I don't think that anybody reads as much as people used to," Miss Hays said.

Everyone agrees television is a decided factor and Miss Hays suggested that one way to illustrate the effect is to consider whether a person watched the Watergate hearing on television or read about them.

"Some children learn to read by watching commercials," she explained. The teaching tool they represent is repetition and for that reason commercials are sometimes used by teachers, she said.

Methods and materials used in reading instruction are part of the equipment IRA offers a local community, teachers as well as parents.

Through local council activities, Mrs. Scarborough said, parents can become informed about what actually is being done to teach their kids in the classroom.

The Greater Greensboro Council was chartered in January and has a membership of approximately 150 persons representing educators, parents and students.

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